

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

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GOVERNOR



Senate Local Govt. Comm.  
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Bill No. SB 299 & SB 301

**Testimony in support of SB 299 and 301**

11 January 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee, my name is John Bohlinger and I am Montana's Lt. Governor. I consider it a privilege to stand before you today to offer support for Senate Bills 299 and Senate 301.

Before I speak, would like to take a moment to recognize the effort that has been put forth by the sponsor. Senator Moss is a passionate, dedicated leader who is committed to historic preservation in the State of Montana. Over the past two years, I have had the distinct honor to serve with Senator Moss and five other committed Montanans as a member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Historic Properties.

These bills make changes to Montana's public policy with respect to historic preservation that our council believes will be a positive and proactive step towards future preservation efforts. The bills are designed to empower local government through permissive authorities, not mandates.

The preservation of Montana's heritage is a worthy aspiration that the vast majority of Montanans share.

Montana is a unique state with a wealth of history, culture, and natural amenities that are treasured by not just Montanans, but by people all over the world.

Tourism is a key segment of our State's economy. Over 10 million people visit Montana each year to enjoy the splendor of our state. Why do they choose to visit Montana? They come to Montana to experience a natural environment and a way of life that harkens back to previous eras when America had fewer people, shorter lines, and a more open

skyline. Montana is called the last best place for good reason, and Senate Bills 299 & 301 will provide counties the permissive authority to act in the interest of their constituents to sell bonds and create local commissions for the purpose of preserving and improving historic property.

It was the Nobel Prize winning author John Steinbeck who said, "I'm in love with Montana. For other states I have admiration, respect, recognition, even some affection. But with Montana it is love." I believe everyone here today knows and shares the love that Steinbeck speaks of, and I believe these bills are way to help preserve the Montana that we all love and share for future generations.

Chairwoman Gillian, Members of the committee, I thank you for your time and I submit to you that a do pass recommendation be made for Senate Bills 299 and 301.